

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 SP-02 L-01 H-01 PRS-01 /040 W

----- 021276

R 231123Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 728

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY KABUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 5726

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, AF, PINT, MOPS

SUBJECT: PAK MILITARY - TRIBAL CLASHES IN FRONTIER AREA

REF: A. KABUL IR 6 800 0103 75 (NOTAL)

B. KABUL 3832 (NOTAL)

C. ISLAMABAD 936

D. KABUL 4048

SUMMARY: SERIES OF CLASHES BETWEEN TRIBESMEN
AND GOP ARMED FORCES WHICH OCCURRED IN BAJAUR
TRIBAL AGENCY OF NWFP IN EARLY JUNE MAY HAVE HELPED
SPARK AFGHAN TROOP MOVEMENTS REPORTED BY EMBASSY
KABUL AND NOW CONFIRMED TO AMBASSADOR ELIOT BY GOA
DEPUTY FONMIN. LIKE CLASHES IN THE TIRAH IN JANUARY,
THESE INCIDENTS GREW OUT OF PAK ROAD BUILDING PROGRAM
WHICH IS PART OF THE BHUTTO GOVERNMENT'S FORWARD
POLICY IN THE FRONTIER PROVINCE. AREA IN WHICH THEY
TOOK PLACE IS CONSIDERED PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE BY
GOP. ACCORDING TO A COUPLE OF UNCONFIRMED REPORTS,
AJMAL KHATTAK VISITED AFGHAN AREAS NEAR THE SCENE
OF THE CLASHES SHORTLY AFTER THEY OCCURRED. END SUMMARY.

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1. FOLLOWING IS BASED ON REPORT RECEIVED BY EMBASSY

FROM AMCONSUL PESHAWAR JUNE 21.

2. REPORTS PAST 12 DAYS FROM TRIBAL AND OTHER UNOFFICIAL SOURCES OF CLASHES BETWEEN TRIBESMEN AND GOP ARMED FORCES IN SOUTHERN PART OF BAJAUR AGENCY WERE CONFIRMED JUNE 20 BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT INTELLIGENCE OFFICER IN PESHAWAR. FIGHTING OCCURRED FIRST WEEK OF JUNE AND LASTED FOR ABOUT THREE OR FOUR DAYS FOLLOWING GOP EFFORTS TO BUILD A ROAD EXTENDING NORTH INTO BAJAUR AGENCY FROM EXISTING ROAD CONNECTING MAJOR BAJAUR VILLAGES OF NAWAGAI AND KHAR. GOP INTELLIGENCE OFFICER CONFIRMED THAT GOVERNMENT'S AIM IS TO BUILD ROAD IN NORTHWEST DIRECTION TO NAWA PASS WHICH STRADDLES THE UNDEMARCATED PAK-AFGHAN BORDER. (ROAD BUILDING ACTIVITY, PART OF GOP'S FORWARD POLICY IN THE FRONTIER, HAD ALSO SPARKED CLASHES IN TIRAH IN JANUARY, REF C)

3. ALL CONSULATE SOURCES HAVE PLACED LOCATION OF CLASHES WITHIN TWO OR THREE MILES OF NAWAGAI. ESTIMATES ON NUMBER OF CASUALTIES (KILLED AND WOUNDED) VARY MARKEDLY. GOP INTELLIGENCE OFFICER SAID HE NOT AWARE OF ANY CASUALTIES, BUT OTHER SOURCES HAVE PLACED NUMBER ANYWHERE FROM 10 TO OVER 100.

4. GOVERNMENT SOURCE INSISTED THAT TROOPS WHICH INVOLVED IN FIGHTING WERE MILITIA FORCES (BAJAUR SCOUTS AND POSSIBLY SOME ELEMENTS OF MOHMAND RIFLES) AND THAT PAKISTAN REGULAR ARMY FORCES ARE NOT OPERATING IN EITHER BAJAUR OR MOHMAND AGENCY. OTHER SOURCES CLAIMED THAT REGULAR ARMY TROOPS WERE INVOLVED IN FIGHTING.

5. TRIBESMEN REPORTEDLY ATTACKED ROAD AFTER FIRST TWO MILES OF IT COMPLETED. ALL REPORTS ARE IN AGREEMENT THAT TRIBESMEN WHO MOUNTED ATTACK ARE REGARDED AS PRO-AFGHAN -- AS ARE, REPORTEDLY, MOST OF TRIBESMEN WHO OCCUPY WESTERN PART OF BAJAUR AGENCY. TRIBESMEN APPARENTLY PARTICULARLY ANGRY WITH GOP'S ROAD BUILDING EFFORTS BECAUSE THEY HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED BEFORE
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CONSTRUCTION BEGAN. DURING COURSE OF TRIBESMEN'S FAIRLY SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO DESTROY ROAD, CLASHES WITH GOVERNMENT TROOPS OCCURRED. AFTER TRIBESMEN RETREATED INTO HILLS, GOP EFFORTS TO INDUCE THEM TO CARRY ON NEGOTIATIONS WERE UNSUCCESSFUL.

6. BOTH OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL SOURCES HAVE SAID THAT ONE REASON GOP ANXIOUS BUILD ROAD AT THIS TIME

IS THAT AFGHANS ARE NOW IN PROCESS OF BUILDING ROAD OF THEIR OWN CLOSE TO BAJAUR AGENCY ON THEIR SIDE OF DURAND LINE. TWO UNOFFICIAL CONSULATE SOURCES TOLD PRINCIPAL OFFICER THEY HEAR THAT SHORTLY AFTER INITIAL CLASHES TOOK PLACE, AJMAL KHATTAK, FORMER NAP GENERAL SECRETARY, VISITED AFGHAN AREAS NEAR BAJAUR AGENCY.

7. CONSUL PESHAWAR'S COMMENT: THE BAJAUR AREA HAS LONG BEEN A SOURCE OF CONCERN TO GOP IN ITS RELATIONS WITH AFGHANISTAN. PART OF THIS CONCERN STEMS FROM FACT THAT AFGHANISTAN HAS ALWAYS WIELDED CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE OVER TRIBAL LEADERS IN WESTERN PART OF AGENCY. (NOTE: BAJAUR (AND DIR) TRIBES ARE NOT AS "DEMOCRATIC" AS MOST PATHAN TRIBES ELSEWHERE AND THE BAJAUR KMANS ARE NOTED FOR THEIR AUTOCRATIC RULE). PAKISTANI MILITARY OFFICERS HAVE ALWAYS REGARDED BAJAUR AS A SENSITIVE AREA BECAUSE IN CASE OF WAR, IT WOULD BE EASIER FOR AFGHANS TO QUIETLY INSERT SIZEABLE NUMBER TCOOPS INTO BAJAUR THAN IN MOST OTHER BORDER AREAS. PAKISTANI MKFICERS ALSO EMPHASIZE THAT PARTS OF BAJAUR ARE AMONG FEW PLACES ALOMG FRONTIER WHERE TANKS COULD BE USED SUCCESSFULLY IN CASE OF HOSTILITIES.

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MRN: 1975ISLAMA005726 SEGMENT NUMBER: 000002 ERROR READING TEXT INDEX
FILE; TELEGRAM TEXT FOR THIS SEGMENT IS UNAVAILABLE

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, PROVINCE, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ISLAMA05726
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: CORE1
Film Number: D750221-0652
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750625/aaaaawwg.tel
Line Count: 142
Locator: TEXT ON MICROFILM, ADS TEXT UNRETRIEVABLE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 75 KABUL IR 6, 75 800, 75 0103, 75 75
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 29 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <17 Sep 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PAK MILITARY - TRIBAL CLASHES IN FRONTIER AREA
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, MOPS, PK, AF
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006